

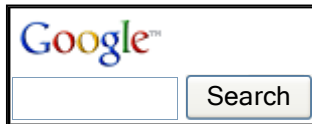


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Speech Technology Magazine's Q&A with Rich Geruson of VoiceSignal



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Q. Rich, VoiceSignal creates small footprint speech solutions for embedded devices, what is the benefit of being in such a concentrated niche?

A. We don't think of the embedded mobile phone market as a niche market. In fact we think of our focus as one of our competitive advantages.

More mobile phones are sold each year than any other consumer electronics item. Last year over 650 million were sold. And, with an installed base of well over a billion, that churns about every 18 months, the market is enormous. Despite the fact that VoiceSignal software shipped on more than 20 million units last year, which is an extremely large volume for any software company, we believe that it barely scratches the surface of the potential of this market.

Q. It appears that a large portion of your customers is in the mobile phone sector, what are some of the other devices that you provide with speech solutions?

A. We believe that one of our strengths is focus. Currently we are focused on mobile phones including smart phones and PDA's with phones. We grew our software royalty revenue over 400 percent last year and we are forecasting similar growth for next year. With this philosophy, obviously propagating our solutions onto more handsets is a key for our continued growth; however, we also realize that one solution does not necessarily fit all handset needs, so we offer a variety of solutions to meet the needs of different devices.

Regardless of whether it is a mobile phone or another handheld device, as convergence continues, device and service complexity will make increasingly unrealistic demands on small keypads as the input mode. VoiceSignal solves this problem. Our growth will come from voice enabling the functionality and applications on these devices. Voice Signal's embedded voice recognition enables one-step access to various types of messaging, increases camera functionality, enhances PDA capability and MP3 players and provides one-step access to Web services, and one-step shortcuts to any application or feature on handheld devices that have any of these functions or features.

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Q. VoiceSignal recently deployed new applications for a Nokia phone and a palmOne phone, please tell us more about the deployments and their results so far.

A. Both are exciting new "try it before you buy it" models. In all VoiceSignal enabled phones, our software ships with the phone. With most of these phones the software is embedded in the handset and included in the price. With palmOne's Treo, VoiceSignal's basic functionality is included in the price and advanced functionality is offered as an option. With the Nokia Symbian phones, the software ships with the phone on the MMC card and you opt in or out for the entire solution. Preliminary adoption rates suggest adoption is running over twice the normal level.

Q. Where do you see speech technologies in mobile phones going in the next couple of years?

A. Just this month VoiceSignal announced the market introduction of VoiceMode™, the world's first full-unconstrained dictation on mobile handsets. Unconstrained dictation on a mobile phone means that consumers can now create and send text messages without having to use the small keypad on mobile phones. It has been the Holy Grail of speech recognition on mobile devices, and now it's a reality. There are also a whole range of converged-device related applications from MP3 to GPS and mobile services that will be speech enabled.

Q. What are your customers asking for in terms of speech and what it has to offer?

A. Manufacturers want us to work with them on their user interface so that they can use speech-activated applications to help them differentiate their product from competition. Carriers are very excited about our ability to provide the end-user one utterance access to any of their revenue generating services, rather than the 10 or 15 clicks now required. This is why most major carriers across the world have worked with us to "spec-in" our capability into the product requirements they send to product manufactures. End-users are interested in the simplification that voice provides to the whole mobile experience, including one-step access to any command on the menu, for example, the ability to say "set phone to meeting mode" to turn off the ringtone, rather than fumbling around before a meeting to find the right set of clicks to execute that command.

Q. What differentiates VoiceSignal's offerings from other speech providers who work with mobile phone providers?

A. First is our performance. We have consistently produced the fastest, most accurate, and noise robust solutions in the smallest footprint. Second is our roadmap. For the past several years we have been the first company to offer new, innovative, speech solutions, including: speaker-independent digit dialing, speaker-independent name dialing, speaker-independent menu navigation, speaker-independent message addressing and most recently VoiceMode, our speech-to-text messaging solution. Third is our language library. We provide embedded solutions in 14 languages, more than any other company. And finally, is our technical support. In addition to providing an easily integrated solution, we also provide the strongest customer support team in the industry.

Q. Are there any new challenges or obstacles that you are trying to overcome with the use of speech?

A. It is the challenges and potential for innovation that make this young market for voice recognition so exciting! Unlike other software products (for mobile phones or other hardware) that are in more mature spaces and later stages of their life-cycle, embedded mobile voice recognition will continue to have significant innovation for a long time to come. We intend to be at the leading edge.

Q. Do you have any additional comments?

A. I think we covered a lot, but I would encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about VoiceSignal or seeing online demos of our technology to visit us at www.voicesignal.com or to send an email to info@voicesignal.com, and I would

like to thank you and your readers for their time and interest.

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